

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6820
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INFO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, GR
SUBJ: COMMERCIAL PRESENCE FAIRS (CPF) - GREECE

REF: STATE 279299

STATE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ENDERS; COMMERCE FOR ASSISTANT
SECRETARY DOBBIN

1. FOR PAST FIVE YEARS, EMBASSY HAS MOUNTED USA PAVILION AT
THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FAIR (TIF) WITH COOPERATION OF
AMERICAN-HELLENIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND LOCAL PARTICIPANTS.
1974 EXHIBITION WAS ASSISTED BY CPF FUNDS, WHILE PRECEDING
PAVILIONS WERE CATEGORY III EXHIBITIONS ORGANIZED AND FUNDED
LOCALLY. WE HAVE ALSO HAD COMMERCE ASSISTANCE THROUGH
CATALOG SHOWS. TIF IS GREECE'S MAJOR ANNUAL COMMERCIAL EVENT
AS WITNESSED BY NOW PERENNIAL PARTICIPATION OF SOME TWENTY
GOVERNMENTS AND SEVERAL HUNDRED GREEK COMPANIES.

2. SINCE EMBASSY HAS PARTICIPATED STEADILY OVER RECENT YEARS,
I BELIEVE IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT WE AGAIN MOUNT
A PAVILION IN THE 1975 TIF. GREECE HAS RECENTLY EMERGED
FROM SEVEN YEARS OF JUNTA RULE TO REJOIN THE ANKS OF
DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS. THE EVENTS WHICH
PRECIPITATED THIS CHANGE - THE CYPRUS CRISIS - WILL BRING
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ABOUT A REDEFINITION OF OUR TOTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GREECE.

IT IS NECESSARY MORE THAN EVER THAT WE DEMONSTRATE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF GREECE AND TO THE GREEK PEOPLE THAT THE U.S. IS WITH THEM IN THEIR ASPIRATIONS - ESPECIALLY THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREEK ECONOMY. THE TIF AFFORDS A VALUABLE VEHICLE FOR SUCH A DEMONSTRATION. THIS OPPORTUNITY WILL NOT BE LOST ON OTHER GOVERNMENTS, WHILE THE ABSENCE OF A USA PAVILION WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PROVOKE UNFAVORABLE COMPARISONS WITH OUR FAIR PRESENCE DURING THE JUNTA YEARS.

3. IN ADDITION TO THESE POLITICAL/ECONOMIC FACTORS, THERE ARE OTHER REASONS WHICH STRONGLY ARGUE FOR A U.S. PRESENCE. THE GOG IS GREECE'S LARGEST IMPORTER AND SEVERAL MAJOR CONTRACTS IN WHICH U.S. HAS AN INTEREST WILL BE UNDER CONSIDERATION THIS YEAR, INCLUDING OIL EXPLORATION, THE ATHENS SUBWAY, THE AEROSPACE MAINTENANCE FACILITY, REFINERY EXPANSION, AND HOTELS. THE GOG HAS APPRECIATIVELY NOTED OUR PARTICIPATION IN YEARS PAST AND I WOULD COUNT ON THIS YEAR'S PARTICIPATION TO CONTINUE TO OPEN DOORS TO ME AND MY STAFF TO PROTECT U.S. BUSINESS INTERESTS AS WELL AS TO PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMS.

4. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, I FEEL IT HIGHLY IMPORTANT THAT WE PARTICIPATE IN TIF 1975. LOCAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, HOWEVER, INCLUDING VIRULENT INFLATION OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, COMBINED WITH GENERAL BUSINESS STAGNATION, MAKE LOCAL FUNDING OF SUCH A VENTURE PROBLEMATIC WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF CPF FUNDS. I FEEL WE CANNOT SUCCESSFULLY PASS ON INFLATED CONSTRUCTION AND OTHER COSTS TO PARTICIPANTS ALREADY BURDENED WITH STAGNATING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. TO ATTEMPT A USA PAVILION WITH CPF FUNDS WOULD POSSIBLY RESULT IN AN EMBARRASSING DEFICIT IN THE PAVILION BUDGET DESPITE STRINGENT BELT-TIGHTENING MEASURES.

5. IN VIEW OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES I WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY CONSIDERATION YOU CAN GIVE TO PROVIDING FUNDING ASSISTANCE TO THE USA PAVILION AT TIF 1975.

KUBISCH

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